346 With the close relationship of Lithuania to these
177 countries they were bound to exert an influence on it, so that Galaunē arrives at the conclusion: "The bell towers of the Ukraine, above all however of Galicia, are known from a much older period (the beginning of the sixteenth century) than ours; several of them differ in their form only little from our bell towers. For this reason, in my opinion one must seek the elements of the wooden fortress in the architecture of the Lithuanian bell towers too." (19)

19. Galaunē, op. cit., p. 92.

346 /111/ If these established points prove that in all probability the Lithuanian bell towers go back in their origin to older models, these towers also contain numerous independent architectonic elements which are to be regarded as purely Lithuanian. The village artist strove for the greatest possible variety within the framework at his disposal. We are always surprised anew by the great richness of form, the diversity of the distribution of the masses, which contain all phases of expression from light enthusiasm to calm seriousness and from simple modesty to complicated expression. Thus each of these wooden bell towers is an individual work of art, deeply rooted in the life of the Lithuanian peasants and indispensable to the picture of the Lithuanian countryside.

B. The Village Art

778 1. The Roofed Crosses

322 764 If the village artist was bound by the practical purposes of his work in the construction of the farmhouses, village churches, and bell towers, his art could be that much more freely unfolded in those strange, towering crosses which represent the real landmarks of the Lithuanian landscape. The German poet Herbert Eulenberg reproduces the

778 impression of these crosses in the following beau-
764 tiful words: "Nowhere in the world except per-
322 haps in the Tyrol does one see as many crosses as in Lithuania. Like high masts they stand individually by the village street, on the ridges of fields, and at crossroads. One finds them grouped together in the cemeteries of Lithuania, where they grow out of the graves like great, gloomy lilies. Bent over by time, these high grave crosses greet the passing hiker or traveller like tokens of the dead, with whom the Lithuanian people as no other live in constant fearful or friendly contact. Especially in the winter it makes an often uncanny impression when out of the broad surface of snow which /112/ covers the whole land the high black crosses project and seem to beckon one with an earnest finger. And the sight of a Lithuanian cemetery in the winter will remain unforgettably impressed in the memory of anyone, when the gloomy outlines of such a group of crosses rise against the glowing red of the sunset like the shadows of Golgotha." (20) The East

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20. Hermann Struck and Herbert Eulenberg, Skizzen aus litauen, Weissrussland und Kurland (Berlin, 1916).

Prussian Alfred Brust says of the same crosses: "There are among them works of art which, surrendered to every wind and weather, belong to the great rarities of simplest but most profound folk art." (21) Prof. Otto Schwindrazheim defines the

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21. Alfred Brust, "Die litauische Kultur und der Expressionismus," Das neue Litauen, 1918, No. 14, pp. 50-51.

Lithuanian crosses as "masterpieces of popular wooden art," (22) and the Italian art historian

778 322 764 [113]

Luigi Caglio actually describes them as the "most typical manifestation of folk art in Europe.' (23)

23. Luigi Caglio, Alla Biennale di Monza (1925). (Quoted according to Galaunė, op. cit., p. 103.)

No artist, however, has more strongly grasped and reproduced the mystical impression which proceeds from these crosses than the Lithuanian painter Čiurlionis in his picture "Samogitian Cemetery." It is characteristic that almost every observer who surrendered himself to the strong mood of these crosses felt at the same time the contrast that exists between these apparent manifestations of Christian faith and the rational nature of Christianity itself--a contrast which naturally does not enter the consciousness of the present-day "God carvers" /Herrgottsschnitzer/, who work within the framework of primitive traditions. And it is really not the abundance of pagan symbols with which these monuments of devout veneration of the dead are decorated, but rather the totality of the impression, which seizes the observer with compelling force. Already their majestic height--five or six meters--is unique and distinguishes them from all similar monuments of Christian origin. But scholarly research too, which has turned its attention to the Lithuanian crosses since the beginning of this century and has tried first and foremost to solve the problem of their origin, proceeding from the most varied viewpoints, has arrived at the same conclusion: the Lithuanian crosses grew out of the pagan veneration of the dead by the Lithuanians and represent a primitive /Unnumbered page with illustration--Roofed Crosses, after a Painting by Čiurlionis/ /113/ monument of ancient Lithuanian culture. Only at a later period did they acquire their present Christian appearance, without, how-

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ever, casting off completely their old forms. We encounter this view, first vaguely indicated by Szukiewicz, the first investigator of the crosses of the Vilna area, in the work of Brensteyn on the Samogitian roofed crosses, in 1906, as an already confirmed theory, which is later extensively supported by the archaeological investigations of Dr. Basanavičius. The famous ecclesiastical prohibition with which Michael, the Bishop of Sambia, in 1426, forbade the erection of crosses in the cemeteries agrees with these conclusions. The founding of the Lithuanian state gave this research a further impetus: many thousands of crosses in the country were photographed and recorded in drawings, so that the history of art has today at its disposal an incomparably greater amount of material than before the World War.

According to our present knowledge, as expressed in the works of Galaunė and Rukštelė,(24)

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24. W. Szukiewicz, Krzyże zdobne w gubernju Wilenskiej ("Wisła" 1903), Vol. XVII. Brensteyn, Krzyże i kapliczki (1906). Dr. J. Basanavičius, Lietuviu kryžiai archeologijos šviesoje (The Lithuanian Crosses in the Light of Archaeology). Brensteyn investigates in his work exclusively the roofed crosses of Samogitia. The essay of Dr. Basanavičius forms the introduction to the picture book of Jaroševičius mentioned at the beginning: Lietuvii Kryžiai. An abstract in German in V. Jungfer, Alt-Litauen (Berlin, 1926), pp. 71-90.) The most recent literature: Antanas Rukšelė, Lietuviu Tautodailė (Kaunas, 1929), pp. 55-69. Scholarly: Galaunė, op. cit., pp. 101-142 (with detailed references).

the modern roofed crosses resulted from simple wooden columns which were erected by the graves of

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the dead as early as in pagan times. They originated from the cult of the dead and were probably intended as dwelling places for the souls of the departed. As such they are also attested to among neighboring peoples.

The development probably proceeded as follows: on these columns a two-part, later polygonal or circular, roof was placed in order to protect the stem from rain and snow. In these square columns, which were of considerable strength, little niches were carved out, perhaps in order thus to provide a dwelling for the souls of the dead, perhaps already under Christian influence; for in these niches, which are still occasionally encountered today, we have the original form of those little saints' chapels with which most of the present-day crosses are decorated. With the decrease in strong trees, the chapels were set free from their bonds, gained structural independence, /114/ and were set on top of the wooden columns--at first in place of the roof, which then appeared raised and supported by little columns, later as real little chapels with partially closed side walls. This facilitated their further artistic development in which Lithuanian wooden ornamentation was able to unfold its characteristic forms. Only at the end of the seventeenth or at the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, in Galaunē's view, did the Lithuanian grave columns described here obtain in part the form of a cross. It resulted from the prohibitions of the clergy, who were opposed to the placing of the figures of saints in such chapels which were attached to simple wooden columns or carved out of them. (25)

25. P. Galaunē, op. cit., p. 110.

The forms of the Lithuanian crosses, their chapels, and their ornamentation exhibit an infinite diversity. Almost every province, even

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every parish has its peculiarities. Among the thousands of photographs mentioned above, which today are found in the Lithuanian folklore museum in Kaunas, hardly one looks like any of the others. So strongly, in spite of all traditional restrictions, have the God-carvers expressed their individuality.

In the spiritual life of the country people these crosses have until quite recently occupied a prominent position. They were set up on all important occasions, at births, baptisms, and weddings, at disasters and illnesses, at bad harvests and as thanksgiving for good ones. They were placed not only in cemeteries, but also at the entrances to villages, in private gardens, on hills and fields, at rivers and springs and in dark forests. Their number was so great that the traveller through Samogitia met them at every turn, and in the region of Vilna, as Szukiewicz reports, (26) they even took the place of the trees.

26. p. 131.

Although in the meantime many have been destroyed by nature itself and many others have fallen victim to war, the ancient Lithuanian province of Samogitia still has at its disposal today an immense quantity of cross motifs and decorative forms. An organization of these crosses into specific types, which /115/ research in art history has repeatedly attempted, is only possible with this abundance of forms if one proceeds from the structural forms of the crosses themselves and disregards all decorative motifs. (27) We

27. p. 127.

then obtain three large groups--the wooden columns provided only with a roof, second the columns with chapels, and third the crosses proper. Among

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the roofed columns Galaunē distinguishes 44 different types, among the columns with chapels 12, and among the crosses with a crossbar no less than 46. (27) Of these groups the first and most

27. p. 127.

ancient has today almost disappeared in Lithuania; the last and most recent is the most frequently represented.

Not all the crosses, though very many, are decorated with the saints' chapels mentioned at the beginning. The latter, to be sure, as can be seen in their style, go back to a considerably more recent period, and seem to have found their model in the style of the wooden bell towers and village churches.

We find such little chapels not only in connection with the crosses--whether it be at the point of intersection of the crossbar or at the end of the wooden column--chapels one or two meters high resting on the earth or built on a stone foundation are also no rarity. In their decoration various types of style from Gothic to baroque, even rococo, can be clearly recognized. As already mentioned in another place, the baroque style obviously met more than any other the decorative requirements of the peasant artist. Its application frequently betrays great taste. From the decorative elements of these little works of art flows, as Galaunē says, "such simplicity, such earnestness, and such subtle sensitivity that one must arrive at the conviction that in Lithuania the baroque style was closely related not only to the stone architecture of the country's cities, but also the psyche of the people." (28) These

28. p. 137.

chapels are filled with statuettes of saints carved

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of wood with occasional votive offerings between them, and at times we see the representation of whole biblical scenes, above all the Way of the Cross.

/116/ The saints' chapels on the crosses and columns themselves are also very diverse. We find up to three arranged on top of each other, and sometimes four on all sides of the column. Thus the Lithuanian cross occasionally has more the effect of a little Chinese pagoda than of a Christian cross. The number of chapels depends on the number of saints' figures which one desired to house in them. Each tier is divided into sections, so that each saint is housed by himself. The form of the chapels is usually quadrangular, but hexagonal and octagonal ones with open fronts are also not rare. Still others, which rest on only moderately high columns, have the form of little altars. Still others are not attached to crosses, but to trees. In addition we find quite simple ones with only a roof over the picture of Christ, which we can hardly describe as chapels.

Among the decorative forms of the little chapels the sawed-out, scalloped, wavy, and openwork edges of the boards, at times completely sawed-out ornamental boards, are most evident.(29)

29. Schwindrazheim, op. cit., p. 48.

In addition there is, both in the crosses and chapels, a great abundance of ornamentation: twisted columns, baroque spiral ornaments, little wooden bells hanging down, stylized wreathes, leaves, and flowers. Many of these ornaments undoubtedly stem from very old, pre-Christian times, primarily those geometrical patterns which we will meet later in other products of the folk art, and which remind us of the ornamentation of prehistoric pots and articles of bronze. The zigzags, the ribbon patterns, the braid patterns, the fir tree

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patterns, the rosettes--they all are repeated in constantly new combinations. In the stylization of animals--the latter occur more seldom--we find birds and snakes, reminders of the serpent cult of the ancient Lithuanians. The crosses obtain their special characteristic, however, in the representation of sun, moon, and stars. The sun is usually represented as an iron cross with beams set on top, at times moved to the intersection of the crossbar. Its symbol /117/ is the circle, at times also a clearly executed sun disc from which rays radiate. In stark contrast to those of the Christian halo, the rays of the Lithuanian cross are zigzags, spirals, or the shape of lotus leaves and thorns. Others are formed like flowers, anchors, and crosses, or like hammers and arrows. The stars appear at the ends of the rays of the sun cross; the moon is a half moon open toward the top beneath the sun disc. Next to the pagan symbols of life are the Christian symbols of the suffering and death of Jesus--spear, hammer, and ladder--in addition chalices and monstrances, angels holding crowns and blowing trumpets, and many other Christian attributes. Nevertheless, this second group is subordinate to the first.

Perhaps later folklore research will be able to explore more deeply the meaning of the symbolism represented here. (30) The pagan symbols

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30. Among others, H. Schaeder attempts a penetrating symbolic interpretation in an essay, "Litauische Ornamentik, Das Land Ober-Ost" (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1917), p. 63.

of life, trees and plants; the symbols of light and animating warmth, the sun and stars; the symbols of love and tender affection, hearts, flowers,

778 and birds; and many others whose meaning is hidden
922 to us grow out of the Lithuanian crosses as the
764 expression of a deep mental attitude which flows from the spiritual life of an inwardly rich people. From the purely artistic angle, in the Lithuanian cross ornamentation, which recalls both a most loyal attachment to faith and a close communion with the dead, we are touched by the compactness with which it grows out of the crosses and blends into a unity with them. (31) In current times, to

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31. V. Jungfer, Alt-Litauen, op. cit., p. 87. V. Jungfer, Hinter den Seen, hinter den Wäldern, Bilder litauischen Volkstums (Königsberg, 1932), pp. 45 and 58.

be sure, it must be recognized how amid a younger and more rationalistic generation the old symbolism of the forefathers is more and more forgotten. Not only does the old custom of setting up crosses disappear; even where wooden crosses are still erected, one meets more and more frequently slender, smooth crosses without any ornamentation, of which only the majestic height still recalls their primitive tradition. (32)

32. A few beautiful and artistically valuable crosses have today been set up in the garden of the Vytautas Museum in Kaunas.

/118/ 2. The Wood Sculpture

532 Our survey of the Lithuanian crosses and their chapels would not be complete if we did not include in our presentation those wooden sculptures of the Christian saints which were mentioned above and for whose sake the chapels of the Lithuanian crosses were created.

Lithuanian wood sculpture, to which we thus turn our attention, has, in its origin and its early stages, not been clarified. Romantic research,

10:Baltrusaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

CROSSES AND CHAPELS

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But Lithuania is not only a country of wooden churches: she is particularly the land of crosses. Inseparable from the landscape their outlines follow the undulations of the fields and penetrate into the woods. They are placed along the roads, in the proximity of sources, on tombs, on *piliakalniai*, both in solitary and frequented places. According to legend you find one at every ten paces in Holy Žemaitija. At the cemetery of Vilnius they leave no room for a tree. Though they are originally funereal they are mostly votive offerings. They commemorate a birth, a baptism, the favorable issue of a lawsuit. They are planted in times of epidemics or of drought. They remind the peasant of the successes and misfortunes

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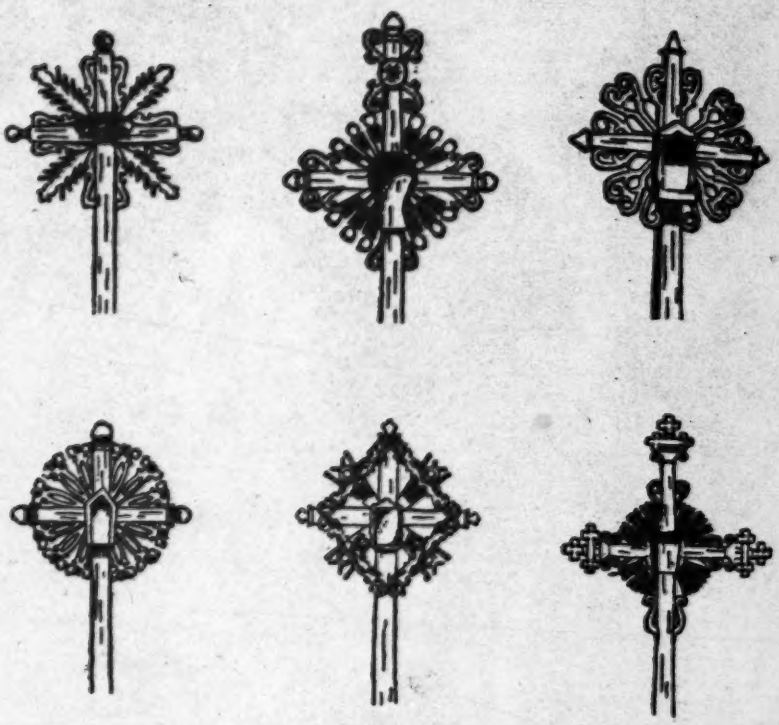

49.—54. Crosses

of his lifetime. Their consecration was celebrated by ancient rites and banquets, at which mead and beer flowed in streams. They often had nothing in common with a cross but the name and the clergy forbade their use. As early as 1426 the church proscribed them. It refused to bless them and had them removed from the neighbourhood of the chapels. Mr. Basanavičius has proved that the origin of these monuments lies far back in primitive beliefs. Trunks of trees, often rudimentary stems, were erected in prehistoric cemeteries. The archives of the churches at Insterburg testify to the custom followed by the Lithuanians up to the 17th century of placing on their tombs figures carved from boards, horses for men and birds for women. Up to the present day in the graveyards of

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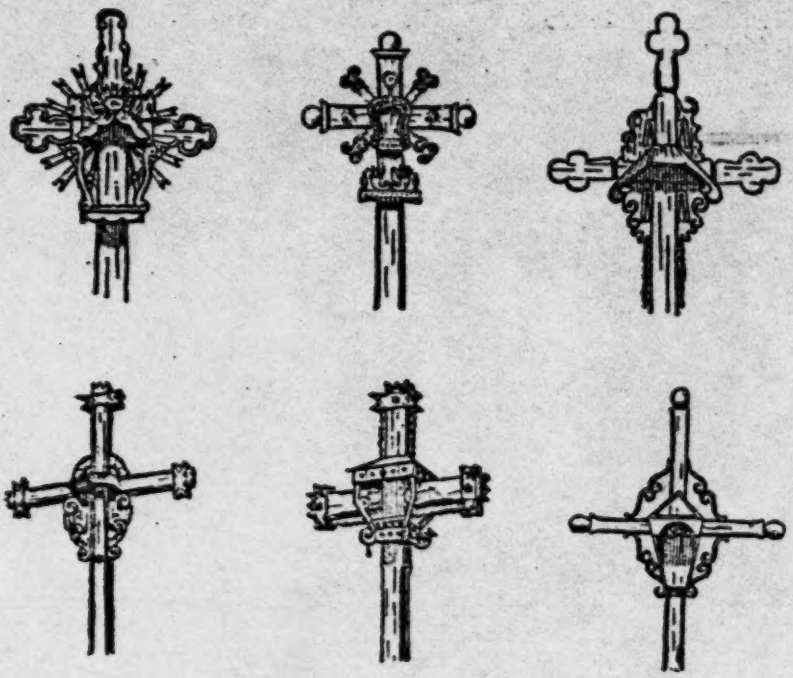

53.—60. *Croixes*

fishermen in the region of Klaipéda (Memel), one may come across toads and fantastically shaped animals carved in oak or in pinewood. They are placed not near the head, but at the feet of the dead. In these monsters cowering on the grave, there is no trace of Christian symbolism Though their variety seems to be inexhaustible, — Mr. Varnas photographed more than 2000 crosses all differing one from the other — these crosses and steles may be divided into several groups. According to Mr. Galaunė, the most ancient type is a simple tree trunk rudely squared. Similar funereal posts have also been found in Russia, in Finland and in Hungary. At their tops there is sometimes a small roof and sometimes a small niche. From these two archaic types stem two series of crosses: the "mushroom cross", crowned by a gable and the "lantern cross", consi-

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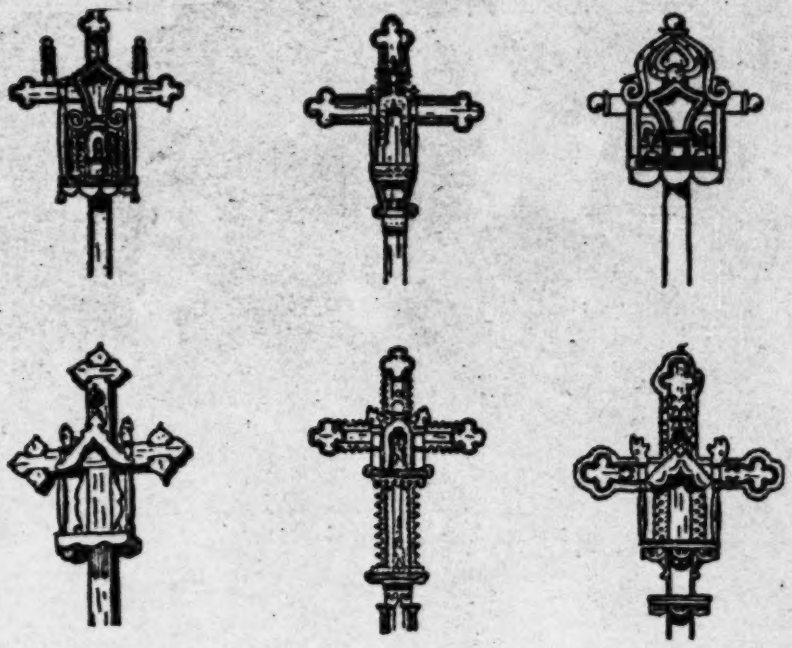

61.—66. Crosses

sting of a chapel supported by a pedestal. A third series comprises the crosses properly so called.

In these types of craftsmanship on a reduced scale, rather than in churches and dwelling-houses, the woodcutter gives his imagination free play to produce complicated forms. The roof of the "mushroom cross" is constantly renewed and reshaped as a cone or a pyramid, a star or a Greek cross. Cornices are suspended below it. It is supported by consoles or by twisted columns. They become reliquaries set on high posts. Sometimes a number of such erections are placed one above the other in the shape of strange pagodas. The "lantern type" goes through a similar evolution, small houses replace the ordinary roof, small *klétis*, the front of which is decorated with two columns, buildings in the shape of a cross or a polygone with spires or small central domes or rotundas. The walls are fre-

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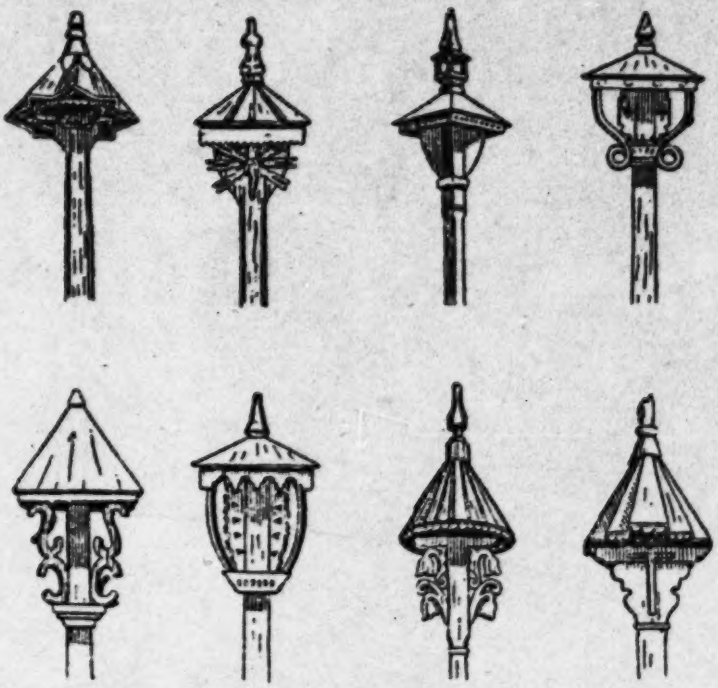

67.—74. *Crosses*

quently replaced by pillars. The chapel is often protected by trellis work, by jutty rooms, by openwork balustrades, so that the chapel itself seems to be nearly submerged under the weight of this light burden. It is an architecture of fairy tales and toys.

But it is the third group, that of crosses proper, that is the fittest object of such goldsmith's work in boards. It may be combined with the "lanterns", and then the chapel is placed at the crossing of the arms. In some cases the chapel disappears completely, leaving nothing behind but its back wall, which then becomes an independent element of ornamentation, a shield with capricious outlines fixed at the intersection of the arms of the cross. One could have thought that henceforth all traces of the ancient themes

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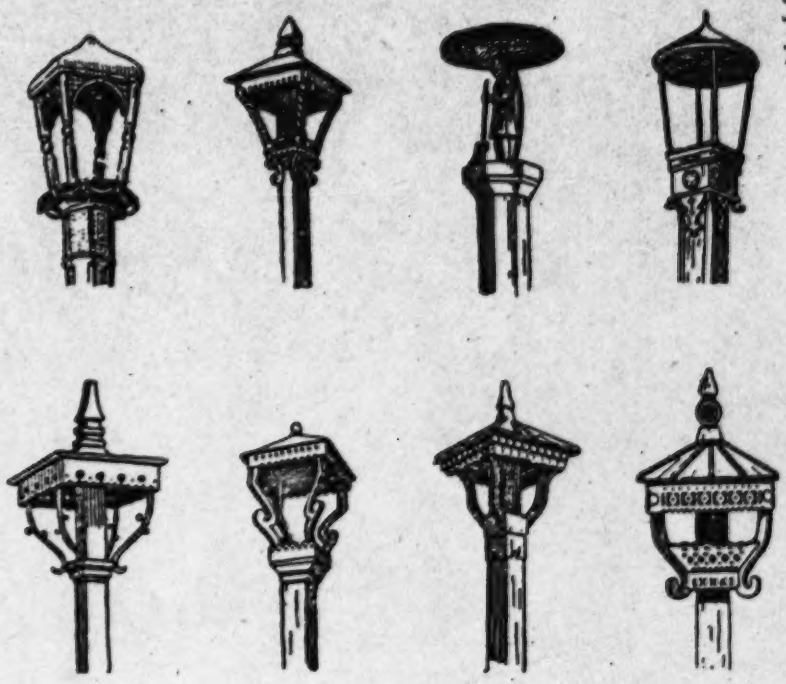

75.—82. Crosses and Chapels

had disappeared, but such is not the case. Around the cross, with or without a chapel, there are often placed wheels and disks of fire. As in Ireland there are frequently to be seen circles or fan shaped arrays of arrows, leafwork, palm leaves, wreaths of flowers. Sometimes their dimensions do not exceed those of a simple aureole, but in certain cases the cross is submerged thereunder.

To the now barely discernible Christian symbol another element is joined, 778
the origin of which goes back to pagan traditions. It is a surviving rem- 531
nant of prehistoric forms and of the ancient worship of the celestial bodies. Sun wheels are revived and eclipse the symbol of Christ. The myth is also preserved in the legends transmitted by word of mouth.

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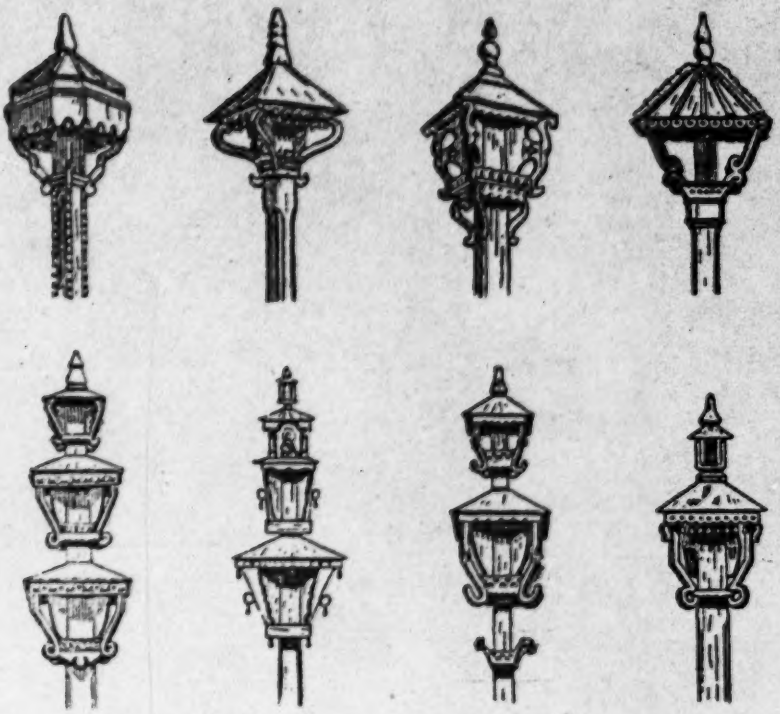

83.—90. *Crosses*

There can be no doubt that the most ancient forms are those in which the wheel prevails. Sunk in the flames of the former god, the emblem of the new religion is lost at first in the conflagration and only emerges from it gradually. Gradually also the light of the celestial body diminishes and transforms itself into an aureole. For a long time both symbols are at par, but later the cross emerges. It has often several arms, each of which itself bears several arms. Finally the last of these accessories disappears and the cross alone remains in its traditional simplicity. The large grave crosses that stand inclined all over the open country belong to the most recent type.

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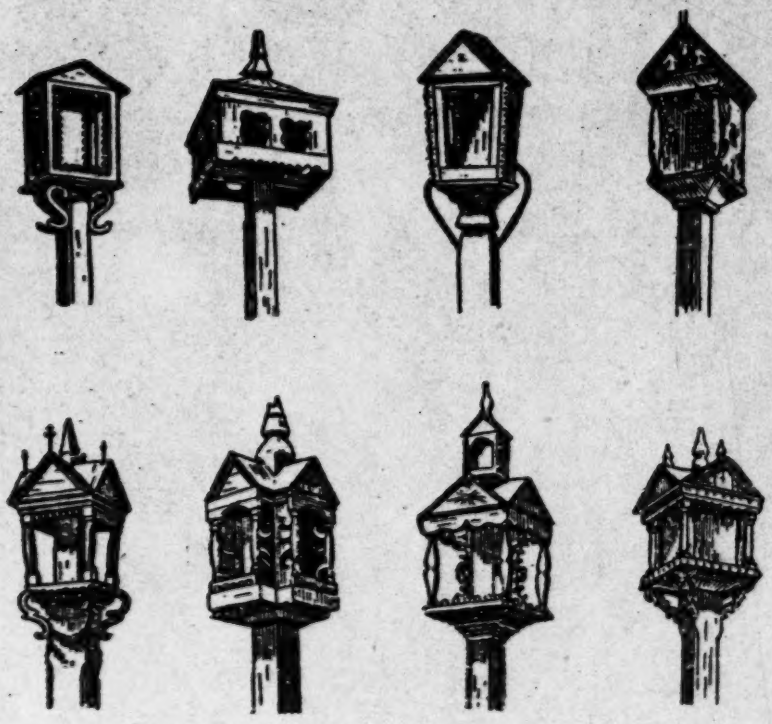

91.—98. Crosses and Chapels

Small votive chapels are scattered in the woods and in the meadows. They only came into fashion at some later time and they are especially frequent in Žemaitija. They shelter small statuettes and offerings are usually deposited there, such als strings of beads of amber or glass, ribbons, colored tissues, artificial flowers and frequently also pocket mirrors, to which some particular meaning seems to be attached. Small statuettes of the Holy Virgin are surrounded by bits of looking glass, that reflect and multiply her image. Sometimes such chapels are suspended aloft on trees, sometimes they stand on the ground or on a base of stone. These are the cages or the cabins of the Saints. The "cages" often attached to oaks,

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99. *Votive Chapel near Kremala*

100. *Votive Chapel near Skiemoniai*

firs and pines, do not differ essentially from the small "houses" set upon pillars and crosses, but the "cabins" constitute a distinct series. They are much larger, their height sometimes attaining two meters, they are no longer toy houses and not yet real houses. Sometimes they consist of an old excavated tree trunk, surmounted by a conical roof, the statuette itself is placed in the very heart of the tree. They sometimes reproduce the *klétis* type of church or its pyramid-shaped steeple, and often they are built on a circular, hexagonal or octagonal plan. They are easier to make on account of their reduced scale, which presents the double effect of a church and piece of furniture. These monuments abound in inventions, but they are not the work of ornamentalists like the lanterns. The decorative elements of Western buildings are adapted to them and the Gothic as well as the classic forms are reproduced there according to the taste of the joiner.

The small chapels are loaded with spires and ornamental flowers. Broken arches run along the walls and join the colonnades. The various themes are thrown into one and recast. Out of this mixture arose a fantastic

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101. Votive Chapel near Jučiūnai

102. Votive Chapel, Forest of Silčnai

miniature architecture, a Pompeian style of the Middle Ages, similar to that of the tabernacles and stained glass windows of churches. Baroque designs treated with liberty and measure are also frequent. Nothing is forgotten here, pinions, broken gables, delicately outlined roofs and so on. Cornices, entablatures, pillars, capitals and mouldings are carved with the greatest skill and an eye for detail. Imaginary and real at the same time, these small tempietti lost amid the vegetation, seem to have been devised to receive the smaller deities of Nature. Similarly to the steles, crosses and churches, these chapels are frequently surmounted with ornaments in wrought iron. These appear later than the wooden solar roses, but continue their tradition. Until the end of the 18th century they usually represent the signs of celestial bodies, the sun, the crescent moon or celestial wheels. Later the cross appears, but it is often broken up by the geometrical ornamentations. Sometimes each arm bears supplementary arms, sometimes the horizontal arms are double or even treble. Angels, animals, persons and certain Oriental images are also represented. But the design is always dominated by the theme of radiation.

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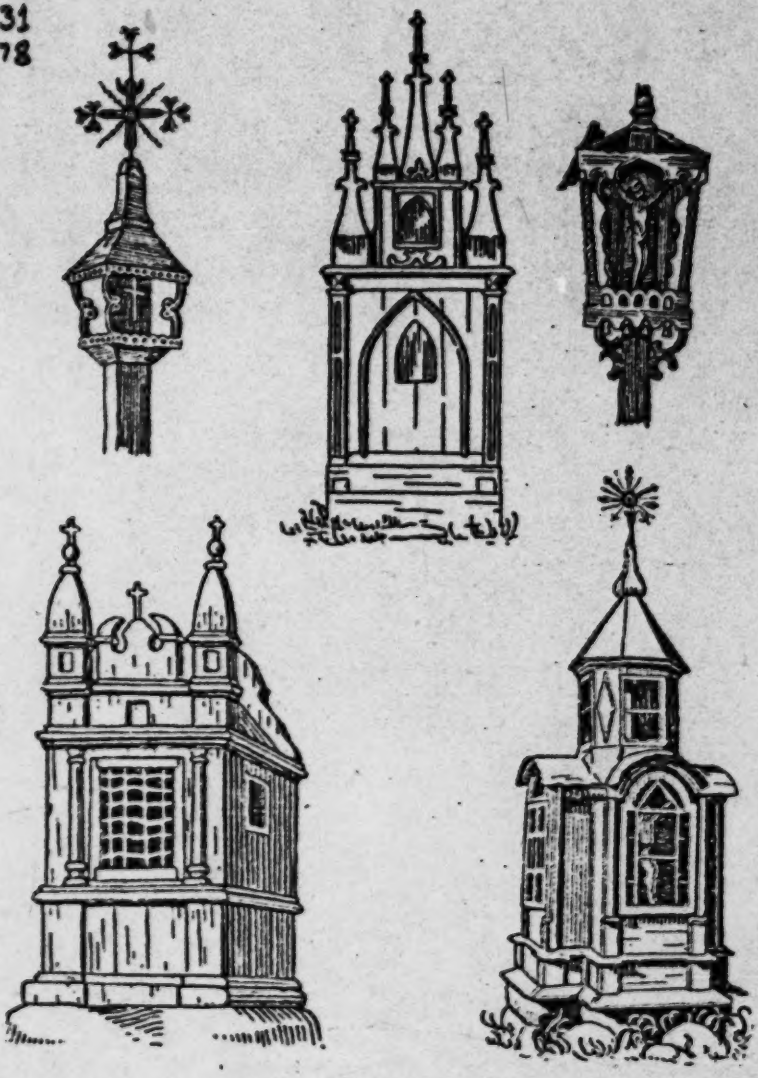

103.—107. Votive Chapels and Crosses

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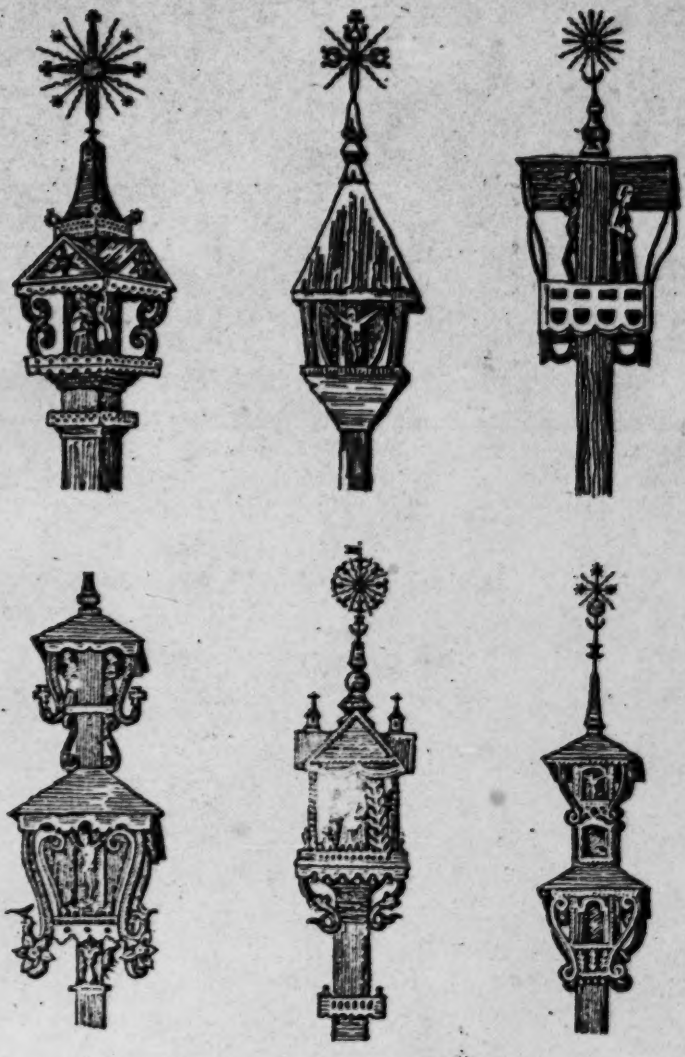

108.—113. *Crosses and Chapels*

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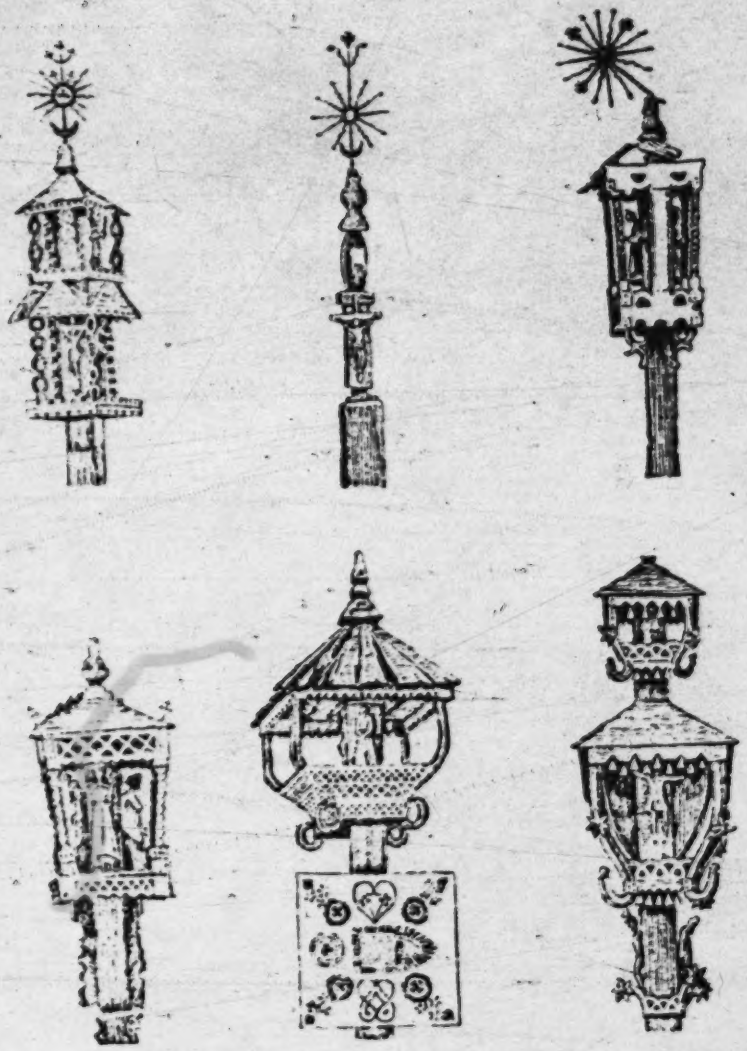

114—115. Crosses and Chapels

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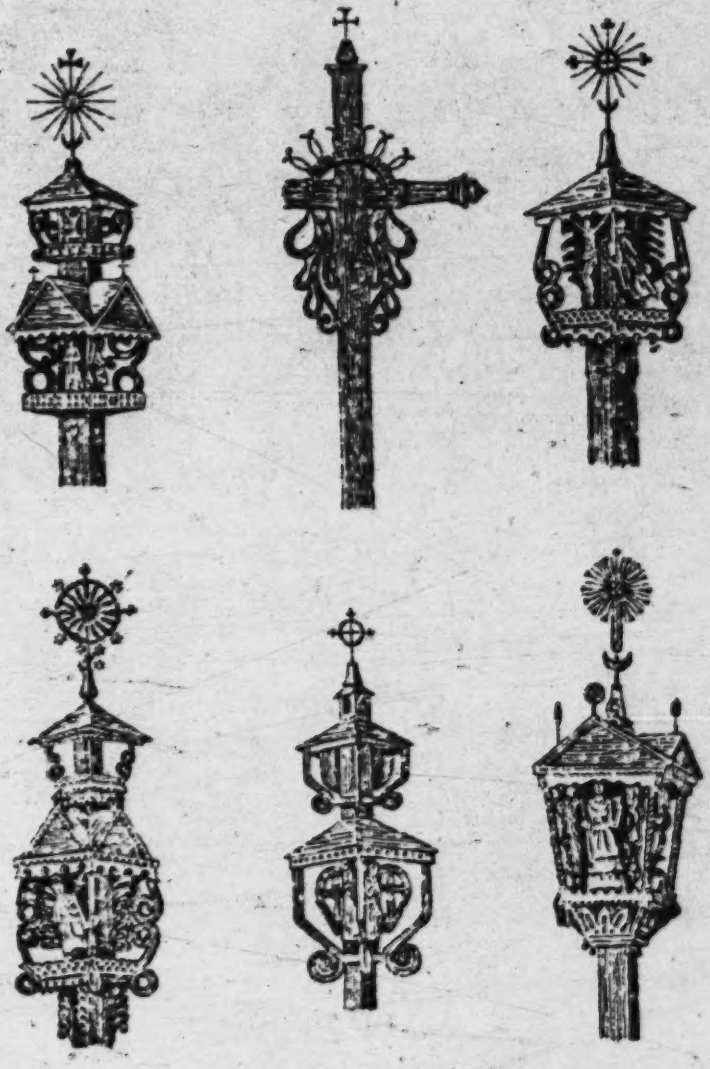

120.—125. *Crosses and Chapels*

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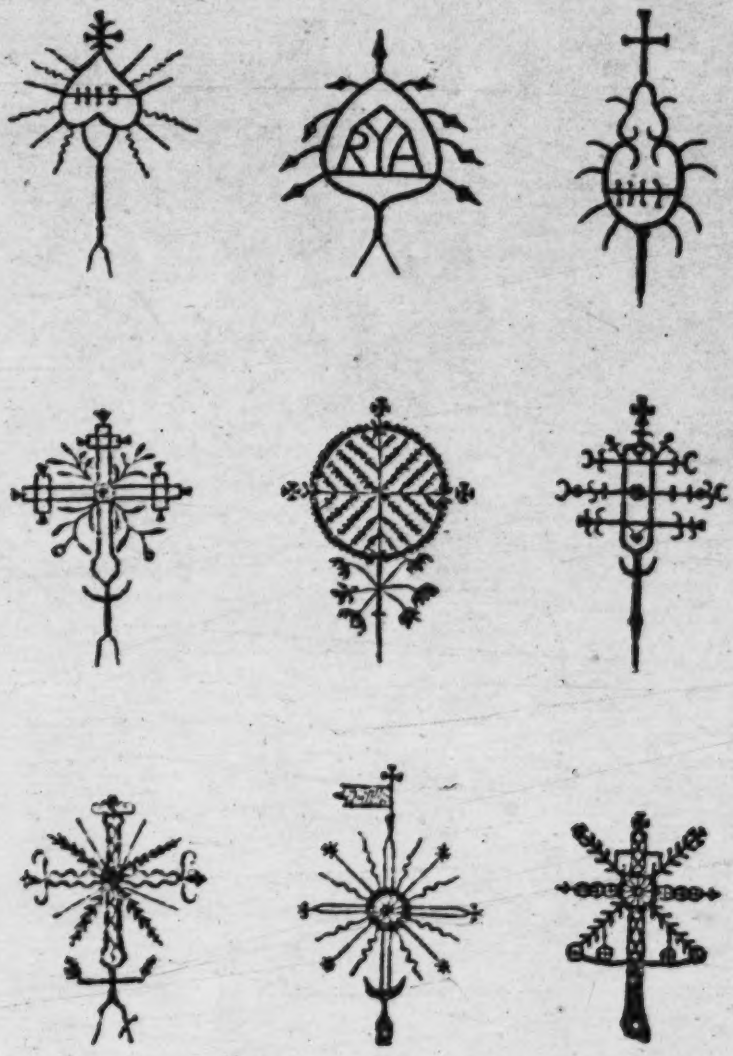

134. Iron Heads of Crosses

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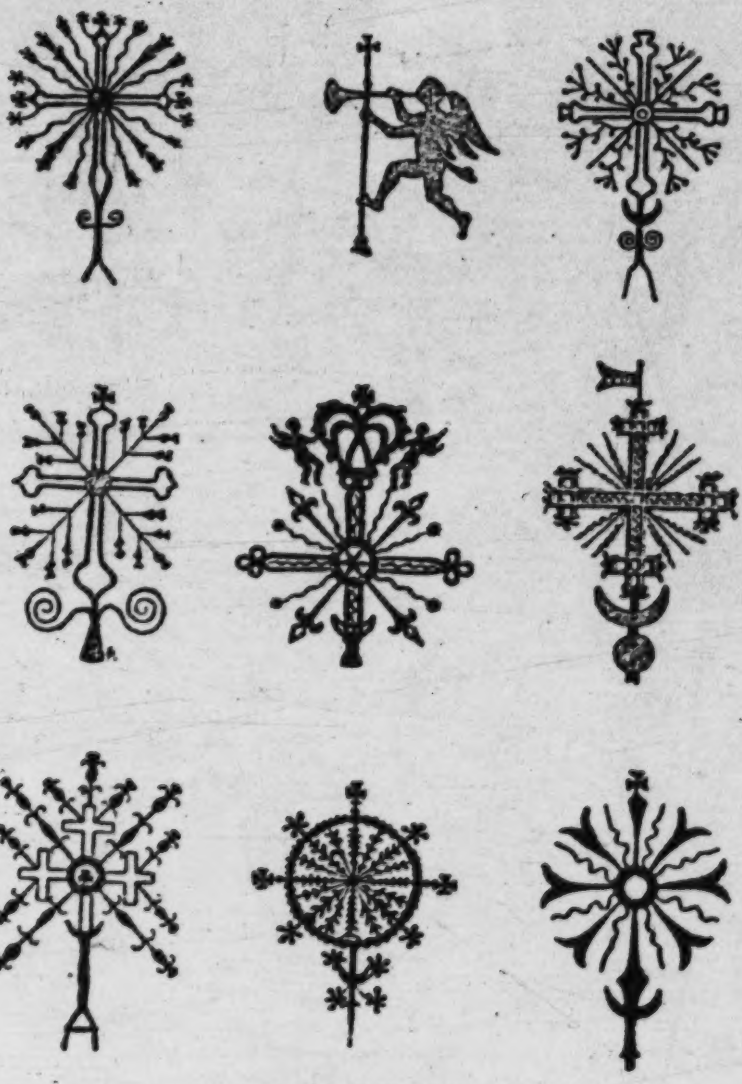

135.—143. Iron Heads of Crosses

10:Baltrusaitis R-4, 5 (no date) 1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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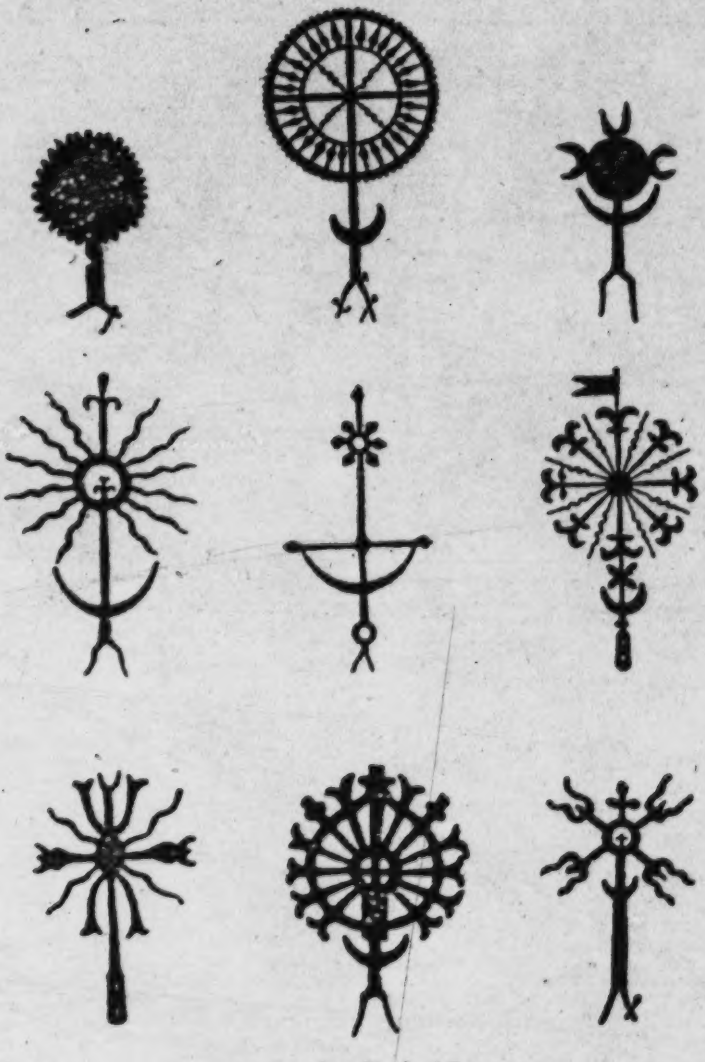

144.—153. *Iron Heads of Crosses*

P. 52

10:Baltrusaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

Arrows stream forth in all directions, regularly undulated sword blades, idealized vegetation, tulips which are already to be found on prehistoric jewelry, the uruta, the national flower and branches of fir. When executed in metal they retain all the hardness and refinement of the material of which they are made. In these complicated networks all the parts are cleverly united and cut with cold precision. The monuments are crowned by iron crystals resembling blackened crystals of snow. 531 778

10:Baltrušaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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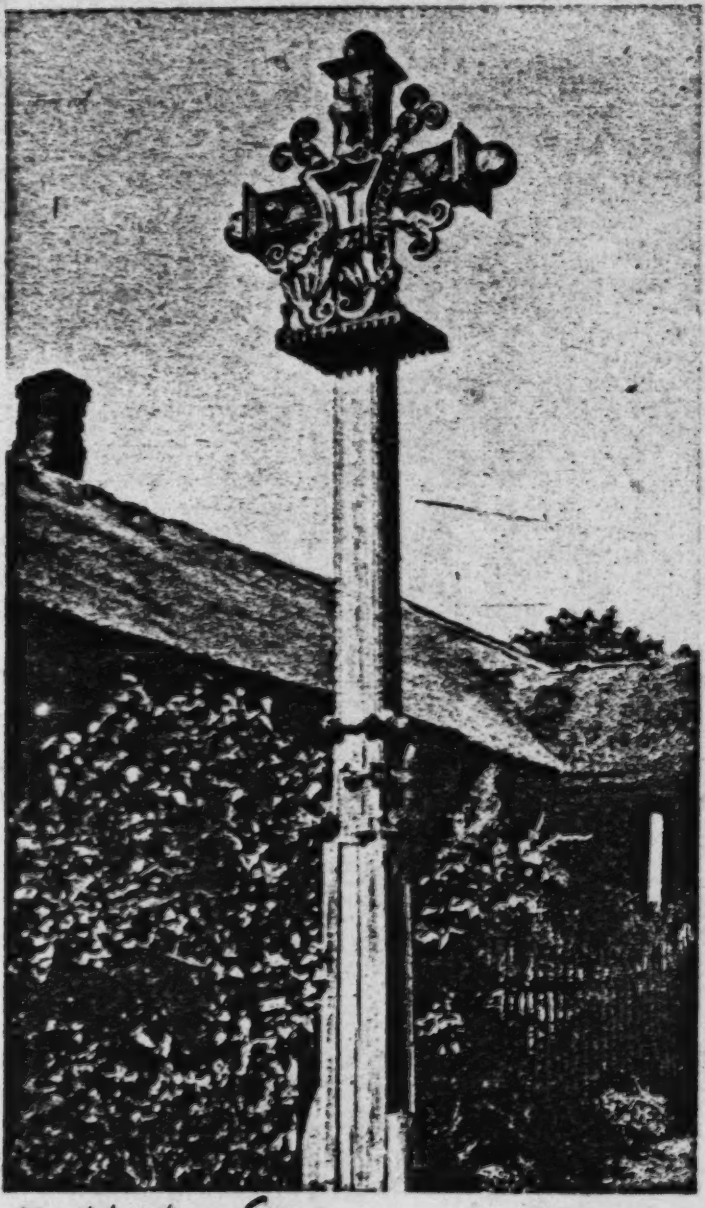

7. Wooden Cross
District of Zarasai

10:Baltrušaitis R-4, 5 (no date) 1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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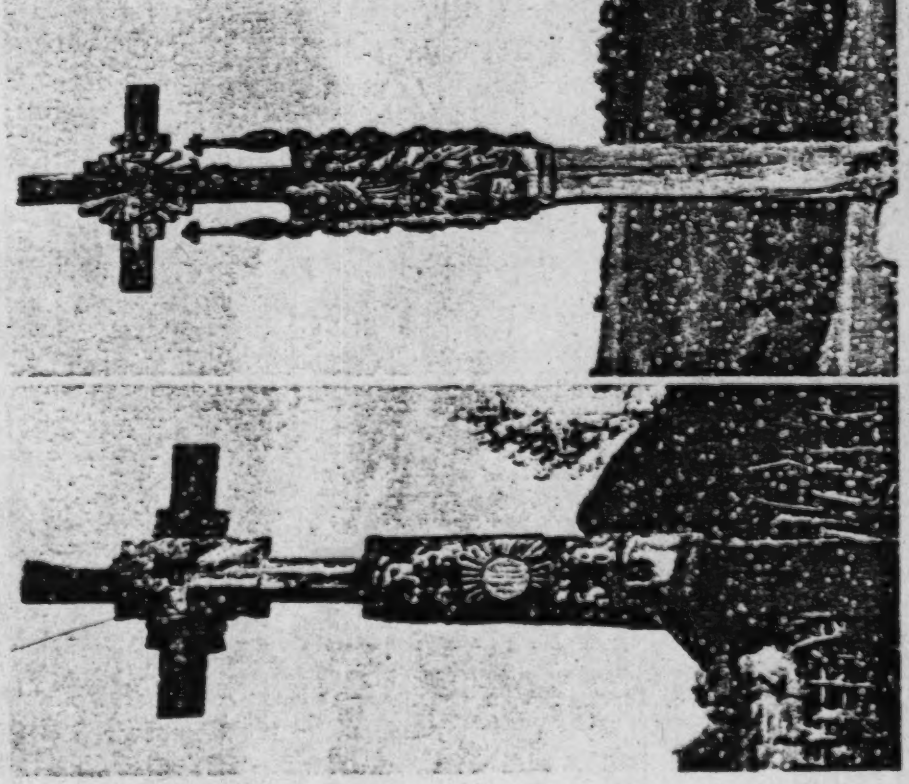
8. Wooden Cross
District of Zarasai



9.-11. Wooden Crosses
District of Kedainiai

10:Baltrušaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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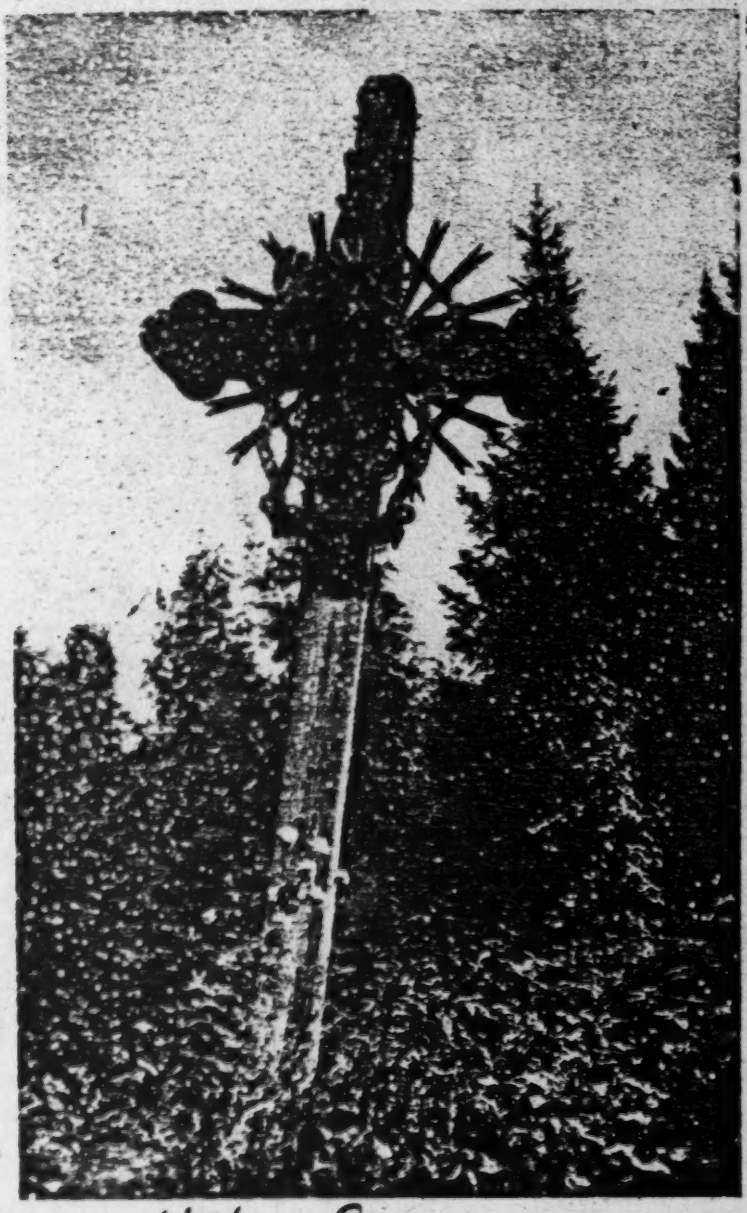

12. Wooden Cross
District of Utena

10:Baltrušaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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13. Wooden Cross
District of Kaunas

10; Baltrusaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

14. Wooden Cross
District of Rokiškis

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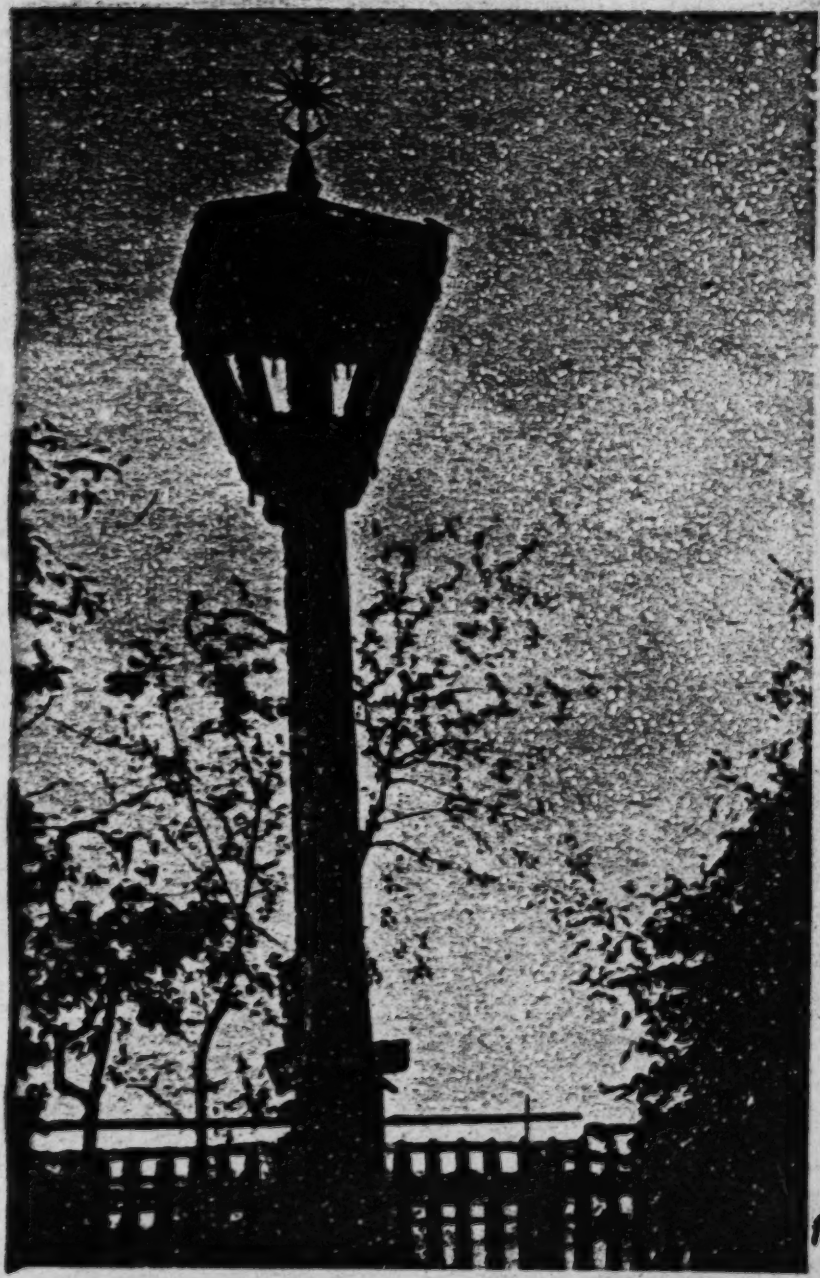

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10:Baltrusaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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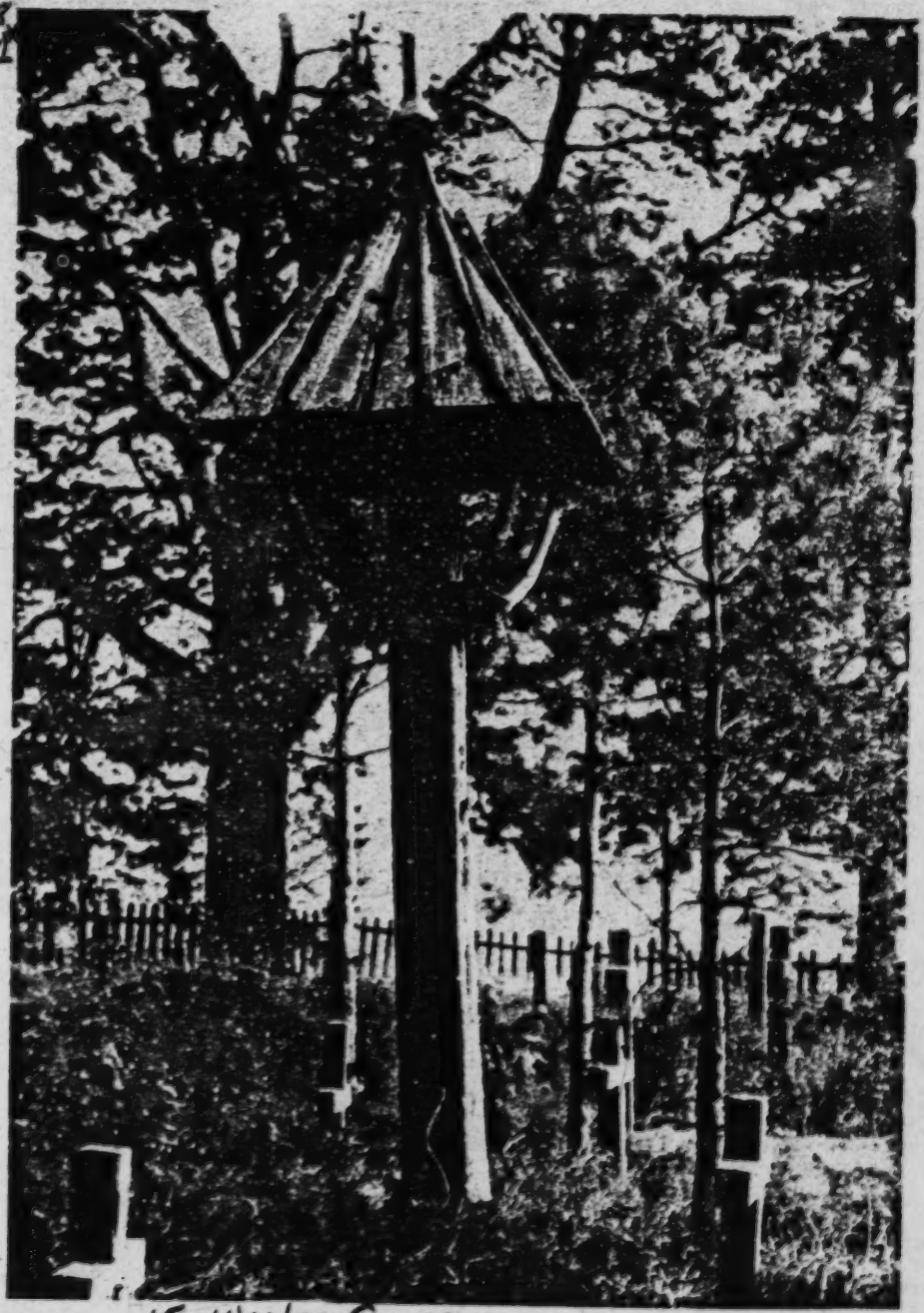

15. Wooden Cross
District of Švenčionys

10:Baltrusaitis R-4, 5 (no date)1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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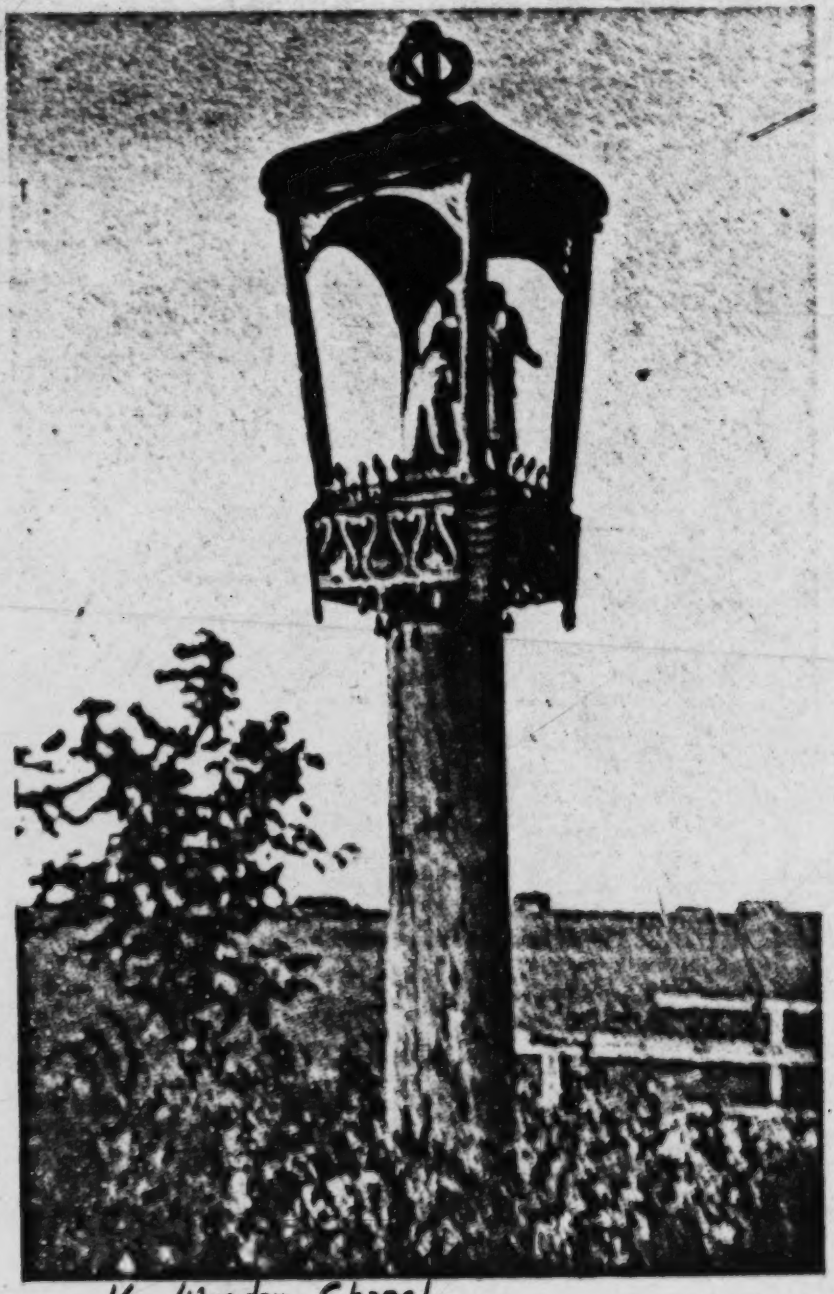

16. Wooden Chapel
District of Rokiškis

10:Baltrušaitis R-4, 5 (no date) 1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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17. Wooden Cross
District of Tauragė

10:Baltrušaitis R-4, 5 (no date) 1948 RB5 Lithuanians RB5

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18. Wooden Cross
Reconstructed from an old model